**English 322B: Linguistics and Society**

Fall 2015

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| **Instructor:** Zachary Beare  **Office:** Andrews 306  **E-Mail:** [zacharybeare@gmail.com](mailto:zacharybeare@gmail.com)  **Phone:** (208) 699-8038  **Office Hours:** M/W 1:30-2:30; Tu 11-12; by Appt. | **Section:** 001  **Meeting Times:** MWF 12:30am-1:20pm  **Meeting Places:** Andrews 39 |

The job of a linguist, like that of the biologist of the botanist, is not to tell us how nature should behave, or what is creations should look like, but to describe those creations in all their messy glory and try to figure out what they can teach us about life, the world, and, especially in the case of linguistics, the working of the human mind.

-Arika Okrent, *In the Land of Invented Languages*

The Course Texts

* Nikolas Coupland and Adam Jaworski’s *The New Sociolinguistics Reader* (NSR)
* Various readings on Blackboard (which should be printed and annotated for class)

The Course Description

English 322B is an intellectually demanding seminar-style course designed to explore and investigate how language is used in the world around us. This course approaches language through a sociological lens, and over the course of the semester, we will examine the intersections of language and various markers of social identity—geographic location, class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, and many more. Along the way, we will explore various methodological approaches for studying language use, the implications of language diversity on education, and the ways that issues of language are often intimately tied to complex matrices of power, privilege, and access in society. At the same time that we will be reading, discussing, and responding to published academic work in the field of sociolinguistics, we will also be exploring linguistic phenomena and debates about language that we encounter in our everyday lives, and the final project for this class involves designing either a study or lesson plan connected to some issue in the field of sociolinguistics.

The Learning Objectives

* Increased familiarity with linguistic terminology (e.g., descriptivism vs. prescriptivism, standardization, dialect, style, discourse, phonology, morphology, pragmatics, hedging, etc).
* Introduction to various methodologies utilized for the study of language (ethnography, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, corpus-based analysis, quan/qual distinctions) and familiarity with debates about these methodological approaches.
* Experience connecting course concepts to issues/debates in the world today, and exploring the ways that language is deeply connected to issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, power, and access.
* Experience researching issues in the field of sociolinguistics and practice proposing and designing a study or lesson plan connected to some issue in the field.
* Experience presenting ideas to large and small groups of peers.
* Experience drafting, revising, and giving feedback to others.

Course Requirements

**Reading**

Like almost all upper-division English courses, there will be a lot of reading in this course*.* It is my hope that the readings I have chosen will allow us to have engaging and thoughtful conversations about issues of language use in society. I have tried to keep the reading load manageable, but it is a steady pace, and we will cover a lot of topics. Some of the assigned readings rely on a technical language from the field of linguistics, and you may need to slow down or look up terms to understand the meaning.

**In-Class Participation**

Every class meeting will require your involvement in class discussion. I am a firm believe that classes are much better when students shape the discussion with their interests and questions. Please come to class each day with specific issues from the readings you would like to talk about. This is NOT a lecture class; it is a seminar-style course, and it is designed around conversation. Because of the importance of participation, it is worth 10% of your final grade. Because I understand that not everyone is comfortable talking in class in the large group, there are other ways you can solidify that participation grade (coming to office hours, emailing me connections you made between the reading and something in the world that I might be able to bring into discussion, demonstrating active listening, participating in small group work, etc.)

**Attendance**

Because of the importance of participation, **more than three absences will lower your grade. More than six will make it impossible for you to pass the course**.You should note that I DO NOT often grant excused absences beyond those initial three except in extreme cases. Use your excused absences wisely.

**Thinking Work**

English 322B is a class where we will use writing to discover and learn instead of just writing to show others what we know. For almost every course reading, I will be providing an open-ended prompt that invites you to reflect on ideas from that reading and to make connections outside of that text. These thinking work pieces are short (300-500 words). These projects will be graded on a ✓/✓+/✓- system. Simply by turning in a response of the appropriate length, you will be guaranteed a ✓ (roughly a B). ✓+s will be given to work that demonstrates exceptional depth and insight.

**Linguistics in the Real World Presentations**

Most Fridays, we will take a break from the dense reading and explore issues of language at work in the real world with a sort of show and tell format. Each of you will sign up for a day to bring in something to share with the group. I will expect you to work to connect whatever you bring in to some issue in the course readings or some aspect of our class conversations. You should also come prepared with questions for the class to help facilitate conversation. What you bring in for these linguistics in the real world show-and-tells is up to you. Perhaps it is a flyer you saw around campus, a commercial, a segment of dialog of a popular TV show, a point made in a political debate, or a Twitter exchange. The important things are that you are able to connect what you bring in to the course, that you have something to say about this, and that you have questions which might feed discussion. You should plan for these to go for about 15 minutes.

**Final Project**

For the final course project, you will propose either A) a study designed to investigate some sociolinguistic issue or B) a lesson plan somehow tied to an issue in sociolinguistics. With either option, you will provide an initial 1-2 page proposal for the project, which you will then expand into a larger 4-5 page theoretical justification for the project which is informed by scholarship in the field. This theoretical justification will be accompanied by an explanation of either the methodology of your study if you are doing Option A or a detailed lesson plan if you are doing Option B (3-4 pages). Finally, your final project should be accompanied by a bibliography of sources connected to your topic (15 sources; 5 of which should be annotated with 150 word annotations).

Grading

**Grade Breakdown**

50% Final Project (10% Proposal; 15% Justification; 15% Methodology; 10% Annotated Bib)

25% Thinking Work Response Papers

15% Linguistics in the Real World Presentations

10% Participation

**Grade Point Equivalent for Papers Grade Scale for Final Grades**

A = 4.0 A = 3.80-4.00

A- = 3.6 A- = 3.55-3.79

B+ =3.3 B+ = 3.25-3.54

B = 3.0 B = 2.90-3.24

B- = 2.7 B- = 2.55-2.89

C+ = 2.4 C+ = 2.20-2.54

C = 2.0 C = 1.90-2.19

C- = 1.7 C- = 1.55-1.89

D = 1.00

Course Policies and Service Statements

**Late Work**

I do not accept late work. Late work is annoying, and it makes me think less of you. **If you know that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time, contact me, and we can possibly adjust the due date.** If you are unable to come to class, email the homework to me the same day before the end of the class period (we have class from 12:30-1:20pm). Otherwise, it will be considered late and will not be graded at all.

**Use of Electronic Devices**

I understand that we live in a society with seemingly ubiquitous wireless devices, and I understand the temptation to constantly check email, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and other social media. However, I ask that you please avoid using your electronic devices during the class period. In order to facilitate this, I would recommend you turn devices off or to silent for the duration of the class. If there is an emergency or reason you need to have a specific electronic device on, please speak to me. Also, know that though I rarely see it worth my time to scold a student for using a cell phone or tablet during class, these are rhetorical acts, and as such, they shape how I view you as a student and human being.

**Academic Accommodation**

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides individualized academic support for students with documented disabilities. Support services can include extended test time, textbooks and handouts in alternative formats (electronic texts, Braille, taped texts, etc), classroom notes, sign language interpreters, and transcriptionists. SSD not only accommodates students who have visible disabilities, but also students with other types of disabilities that impact college life. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment with the Director, Veva Cheney, or the Assistant Director, Barbara Woodhead. If you do not have a documented disability but you are having difficulties with your coursework (such as receiving low grades even though you study more than your classmates or find you run out of time for test questions when the majority of your peers finish their exams in the allotted time), you may schedule an appointment with Veva Cheney or Barbara Woodhead to discuss the challenges you are experiencing.

**The Writing Center at UNL**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website at www.unl.edu/writing for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Discourse conventions of the Western academy expect you to conduct yourself with academic integrity. All work you turn in during this course is expected to be your own work written for this course during this semester. Passing another’s work off as your own is grounds for failure in this course. You should also properly cite texts (digital or print) that you use for this course using correct MLA citation to be sure you are giving proper credit to ideas, words, and passages that are not your own. If you have any questions about plagiarism or about how to properly cite your sources, please feel free to come to me with those questions. UNL policies for academic dishonesty are elaborated in your Bulletin.

Course Schedule—**Subject to Change**

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| **Week** | **Monday** | **Wednesday** | **Friday** | **Notes** |
| 1 | 8/24  Intros, syllabus | 8/26  **Read Before Class:** Coupland and Jawarsky, “Social Worlds Through Language” (NSR-1-22)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 8/28  **Read Before Class:** Hymes, “Models of Interaction of Language and Social Life” (NSR 583-597)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** |  |
| 2 | 8/31  **Read Before Class:** Cameron, “Demythologizing Sociolinguistics” (NSR 106-118)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/2  **Read Before Class:** Ochs, “Linguistic Resources for Socializing Humanity” (NSR 405-424).  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/4  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! | Friday, September 4th-Last day to drop without a W. |
| 3 | 9/7  NO CLASS-Labor Day! | 9/9  **Read Before Class:**  Wolfram, “Dialect in Society” (NSR 35-49).  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/11  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 4 | 9/14  No Reading  **Thinking Work Due:** Create US and Midwest Dialect Maps  In-Class Watch *American Tongues.* | 9/15  **Read Before Class:** Hartley, “Bostonian Perceptions of U.S. Dialects”  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/16  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 5 | 9/21  **Read Before Class:** Niedzielski and Preston, “Folk Linguistics” (NSR 256-273)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/23  **Read Before Class:** Eckert, “Ethnography and the Study of Variation”  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/25  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 6 | 9/28  **Read Before Class:** Labov, “The Social Stratification of (r) in NYC Department Stores” (NSR 49-59)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 9/30  **Read Before Class:** Cutler, “White Teens, Hip-Hop, and African American English” (NSR 299-310  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/2  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 7 | 10/5  **Read Before Class:** Fish, “What Should Colleges Teach” AND Young, “Should Writers Use Their Own English?” (BB)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/7  **Read Before Class:** CCCC, “Students Rights to Their Own Language”  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/9  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 8 | 10/12  **Read Before Class:** Godley, Sweetland, and Wheeler, “Preparing Teachers for Dialectally Diverse classrooms”  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/14  **Read Before Class:**  O’Barr and Atkins, “‘Women’s Language’ or ‘Powerless language’?” (NSR 159-167)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/16  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! | Friday, October 16th—last day to change to Pass/No Pass |
| 9 | 10/19  No Class—Fall Break | 10/21  **Read Before Class:** Leaper and Robnett, “Women Are More Likely to Use Tentative Language, Aren’t They?”  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/23  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! | Fall Break 19th-20th |
| 10 | 10/26  **Read Before Class:** Kiesling, “Fraternity Men: Variation and Discourses of Masculinity” (NSF 187-200)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/28  **Read Before Class:**  Wetherell and Edley “Masculinity Manoeuvres” (NSF 201-2014)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 10/30  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!!  **FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE!!** |  |
| 11 | 11/2  **Read Before Class:** Hall, “Lip Service on the Fantasy Lines” (NSF 229-249).  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 11/4  In Class Watch “Do I Sound Gay?”  Or listen to Terry Gross Interview. | 11/6  Linguistics in the Real World Presentations!! |  |
| 12 | 11/9  **Read Before Class:** Tagliamonte, “Situating Media Influence in Sociolinguistic Context” AND Thurlow, “Generation Txt?: The Sociolinguistics of Young People’s Text Messaging” (BB)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 11/11  **Read Before Class:** Lakoff and Johnson “excerpts from *Metaphors We Live By*” and Catalano and Waugh, “The Language of Money” (BB)  **Thinking Work Due: TBA** | 11/13  **Flex Day, Talking About Final Projects, etc.** | Last day to withdraw from course. |
| 13 | 11/16  **Draft of Final Project Due for Peer Review** | 11/18  **No Class-Conferences** | 11/20  **No Class-Conferences** | Last Day to withdraw from classes. |
| 14 | 11/23  **No Class-Conferences** | 11/25  No Class—Thanksgiving | 11/27  No Class—Thanksgiving |  |
| 15 | 11/30  Final Project Presentations | 12/2  Final Project Presentations | 12/4  Final Project Presentations |  |
| 16 | 12/7  Final Project Presentations | 12/9  Final Project Presentations | 12/11  Final Projects Due!!  End of Semester Celebration!  Evals |  |
| 17  Finals | 12/14 | 12/16 | 12/18 | Final Exam Week-No Class |